DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 516 EC 302 058

AUTHOR	Pickett, Anna Lou
TITLE	The Employment and Training of Paraprofessional Personnel: A Technical Assistance Manual for Administrators and Staff Developers.
INSTITUTION	City Univ. of New York, N.Y. Center for Advanced Study in Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC. Div. of Personnel Preparation.
REPORT NO	CASE-06-88
PUB DATE	Jun 88
CONTRACT	G008530189
NOTE	59p.; Developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services. For a related document, see EC 302 057.
AVAILABLE FROM	City University of New York, CASE, National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services, 25 W. 43 St., Room 620 N., New York, NY 10036 ($10).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrator Role; Career Development; Curriculum; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Employment Patterns; Models; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; *Personnel Management; *Staff Development; *Supervision; Teacher Responsibility; Teacher Role; Teaching Skills; Technical Assistance

ABSTRACT

This technical assistance manual provides information for assessing the impact of increased employment of paraprofessionals on all special educational and personnel practices, facilitating the integration of paraprofessionals into various classroom settings and staffing patterns, and improving the performance and productivity of paraprofessionals through comprehensive standardized systems of career development. Parts I and II provide background information on the changing responsibilities of teachers, other support personnel, and paraprofessionals; reasons for the increased utilization of paraprofessionals in roles that are becoming more sophisticated and challenging; and suggestions for structuring personnel practices and training programs to improve the performance and management of paraprofessionals. Extensive appendices include: (1) competencies for instructional paraprofessionals; (2) an outline of a model core curriculum designed specifically for paraprofessionals employed by public schools; (3) a format for developing functional job descriptions along with an example of a model career ladder for paraprofessionals; (4) samples of performance review instruments; (5) a description of the roles and responsibilities of policy makers and administrators at the state, district, and building level; and (6) a discussion of management skills required by teachers to supervise and work more effectively with paraprofessionals. (Contains 10 references.) (JDD)

EC 302038

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The Employment and Training of Paraprofessional Personnel: A Technical Assistance Manual for Administrators and Staff Developers

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New Careers Training Laboratory
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06-88

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface	i
Acknowledgements	iii
I. PARAPROFESSIONALS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION	1
- Framing the Issues	1
- A Definition	2
- The Changing Roles of Teachers	2
- The Changing Roles of Paraprofessionals	3
II. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND PERSONNEL PRACTICES	5
- Management and Supervision of Paraprofessionals	5
- Differentiated Staffing	6
- Job Descriptions	6
- Career Ladders	7
- Training	8
- The Roles of Institutions of Higher Education	9
- Certification/Credentialing Procedures	9
III. Appendices	
A. Integrating Paraprofessionals into Classrooms: The Roles of State and District Level Administrators, Principals and Teachers	11
B. Task (Job) Analysis Procedures	15
C. Format for Preparing Job Descriptions and Hiring Procedures	18
D. Sample Job Descriptions and a Model Career Ladder	21
E. Training - Guidelines and Models	29
F. Strategies for Evaluating Paraprofessionals	36
G. Credentialing Models	44
H. References and Resources	45

This manual was developed through a grant (#GOO8530189) from the Division of Personnel Preparation, Office of Special Education Programs and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. The content does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department and no official endorsement should be inferred.

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Preface

The impact of providing increased and improved education and related services for all children and youth with special needs has created major changes in the responsibilities of teachers and professional support personnel. As a result of the assignment of more complex roles and tasks to teachers, policy makers in local school districts nationwide have turned to paraprofessionals as one method to supplement the program and management functions of teachers, physical, occupational and speech therapists, child care professionals in early intervention and preschool programs, and vocational and rehabilitation specialists.

Paraprofessionals are employed by public school systems in all geographic and demographic areas of the country. They serve as a unique human resource for school systems to draw from because of a combination of characteristics many of them share: They are usually long term residents of a community no matter whether it is a remote rural region or major urban center. Their roots are in the community and they understand local idiosyncracies including fiscal conditions and philosophies of education based on their knowledge of the local economy, traditions and cultural heritage (Pickett, 1986). Further, paraprofessionals who have demonstrated special talents for teaching are excellent candidates for recruitment to the ranks of professional personnel (Pickett, 1988). It should be stressed, however, that many persons working as paraprofessionals prefer that role, because they prefer to work directly with students and do not want to assume the program and classroom management tasks teachers must perform.

Despite the fact that paraprofessionals have become major contributors in the delivery of special education services, opportunities for training and career mobility have not kept pace and their supervision and evaluation are often conducted on an ad hoc basis. Additionally, most school districts have not developed functional job descriptions for paraprofessionals based on an analysis of the work they are actually performing in today's classrooms; nor have they established clearly defined staffing arrangements that differentiate between appropriate responsibilities for teachers and paraprofessionals in the various functions that take place in an effective well managed classroom.

The purpose of this technical assistance manual and a companion publication, A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES, is to provide policy makers, administrators and staff developers with information they can use: 1) to assess the impact of increased employment of paraprofessionals on all educational and personnel practices; 2) to facilitate the integration of paraprofessionals into various classroom settings and staffing patterns; and 3) to improve the performance and productivity of paraprofessionals through comprehensive standardized systems of career development.

Several techniques were used to prepare this technical assistance manual and the training modules. An advisory committee reviewed the objectives for the project. They provided substantial information about procedures and methods that have been tested and proven effective with regard to the employment, training and deployment of paraprofessionals. And perhaps of even greater significance, they offered us constructive suggestions about strategies that have been tried and did not work.

Some of the material and the recommendations contained in this report have their roots in the more than two decades of experience of the New Careers Training Laboratory, a leader in the development of the paraprofessional movement throughout the human services, and the continuing efforts of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Human Services. Additional data and resources were gathered in interviews with administrators, teachers, staff developers and paraprofessionals during the pilot testing phase of the project.

The content in this manual is divided into three parts. Parts I and II provide background information on the changing responsibilities of teachers, other support personnel and paraprofessionals; reasons for the increased utilization of paraprofessionals in roles that are becoming more sophisticated and challenging; and suggestions for (re)structuring personnel practices and training programs to improve the performance and management of paraprofessionals.

Part III contains a series of appendices including competencies for instructional paraprofessionals, an outline of a model core curriculum designed specifically for paraprofessionals employed by public schools, a format for developing functional job descriptions along with an example of a model career ladder for paraprofessionals, samples of performance review instruments, a description of the roles and responsibilities of policy makers and administrators at the state, district and building level, and a discussion of management skills teachers require to supervise and work more effectively with paraprofessionals. In order to maintain continuity throughout the materials developed during this project, some of the content and forms used in this manual are reprinted from the instructional modules for paraprofessionals and other publications produced previously by the New Careers Training Laboratory and the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals.

1988

Anna Lou Pickett,
Project Director

Acknowledgements

Many people have made contributions to the work of this project. It started with the work of the advisory committee. All of the members of the committee are leaders of the paraprofessional movement nationally, and therefore, provided invaluable insight and assistance in the development of the competencies for paraprofessionals, curriculum content, and techniques for improving the management and training of paraprofessionals. They met once as a group and each of them continued to support the activities of the project in a multitude of ways. The members of the committee were: 1) Virginia Beridon, Director, Bureau of Program Specialists. Office of Special Education Services The Louisiana Department of Education; 2) Elsa Brizzi, Project Manager, Los Angeles Intermediate School District, Los Angeles, California; 3) Karen Faison, Consultant, Value Based Training, Omaha, Nebraska; 4) Leonard Fitts, Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, Lower Camden County Regional High School District, Atco, New Jersey; 5) Phyllis Kelly, Director of Paraprofessional Programs the Division of Special Education of the Kansas Department of Education, Topeka, Kansas; and 6) Richard White, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Instruction, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Stan Vasa and Allen Steckleberg from the Department of Special Education and Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln willingly shared information and assistance based on the "fruits of their labors" in a broad range of activities concerned with improving the employment, supervision and training of paraprofessionals.

Along the way there were many people who went out of their way to help and encourage us. They were policy makers and administrators responsible for improving the quality of special education despite shortages of skilled personnel and fiscal resources, staff developers and community college personnel who are committed to finding ways and means to improve the performance and status of paraprofessionals as members of instructional teams, and teachers and paraprofessionals who recognize their common goals and shared concerns.

Lucille Mascetti was the project secretary and as usual she made life a whole lot easier because of her commitment and energy.

Finally, it has been more than two decades since the New Careers Training Laboratory (NCTL) was created. I would like to acknowledge the founders and original staff of NCTL whose body of work has had a major impact on the materials developed by this project. Alan Gartner, Frank Riessman, Vivian Carter Jackson, William Lynch, Francis Dory, and so many more provided leadership to the creation of the paraprofessional movement, and while they have moved on to other arenas, their vision and the systems they developed are as relevant to the field today as they were in the late 1960s and 70s when it all began.

PARAPROFESSIONALS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Framing the Issues

Over the last decade, a number of events have occurred that have caused policy makers and administrators to turn to paraprofessional personnel to supplement and extend the programmatic and administrative functions of teachers and other professional support staff. They range from: the passage of state and federal legislation and court orders requiring a free, appropriate education in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities; to the current wave of educational reform initiatives designed to restructure and enhance the overall status of education; to the movement to unite general and special education to improve the quality of services for all students with special needs; to the redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other professional support staff; to the chronic shortages of personnel in all programmatic and administrative services offered by local school districts.

The legislative actions, in particular, have exerted profound pressures on schools nationwide. They have brought about an almost insatiable need for skilled personnel at all levels to provide services to students with diverse functioning levels, learning styles and disabilities. These needs have been compounded with the passage of the amendment to P.L. 94-142 requiring local school districts to provide services to children, ages three to five, by 1990, and PL 99-457 the Handicapped Infant and Toddler Program, that encourages states to extend services to infants from birth to two and their families.

The most significant factor that has led to the expanded use and the assignment of more complex duties to paraprofessionals is the restructuring and redefinition of the roles and responsibilities of teachers from "the sole authoritative provider of information to large groups of students, to the teacher as the classroom manager/orchestrator/facilitator of student programs and learning" (Pickett, 1988).

While there are many reasons for utilizing paraprofessionals to work alongside teachers and other professional educators, the most important is to improve the quality of education and related services. The greatest contribution paraprofessionals make toward improving the quality of instructional services is to enable teachers to concentrate on diagnosing and prescribing programs to meet the identified needs of each student. Paraprofessionals enhance the quality of instruction and other educational activities in the following ways:

1. the educational program becomes more student oriented and flexibility within the classroom is increased;

2. individualized tutorial services for students can be provided;

3. the teacher has more time to:

   - confer with parents and colleagues;
   - diagnose problems;

- prescribe and plan for individual instruction;
- try a broader range of teaching techniques and strategies; and
- evaluate the progress of each student (Pickett, 1986 and White et al, 1980).

A Definition

The roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals have changed dramatically since the 1950s when they were first introduced into the classroom as teacher aides. Initially, they performed clerical, housekeeping and monitoring chores, as a means of freeing teachers from these routine tasks and enabling them to spend more time teaching. The paraprofessional movement gained momentum throughout the 1960s and 70s, when administrators turned to this new category of workers: to serve as liaisons between the schools and community to bridge a growing lack of confidence between the consumers of educational services and service providers; and to assist teachers by reviewing and reinforcing lessons with small groups of students. In only three decades, paraprofessionals have become technicians and specialists who are integral members of the instructional team who might more aptly be described as "para-educators", just as their counterparts in law and medicine are designated as paralegals and paramedics (Pickett, 1988).

The definition of the term paraprofessional we are using in this manual was developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services. A paraprofessional is an employee: 1) whose position is either instructional in nature or who delivers other direct and indirect services to students and/or their parents; and 2) who works under the supervision of a teacher or another professional staff member who is responsible for the overall conduct of the class, the design and implementation of individualized education programs, and the assessment of the effect of the programs on student progress.

The Changing Roles of Teachers

Instructional and administrative duties for teachers have evolved over the last several years no matter whether they work in general, compensatory or special education. However, the federal and state laws requiring individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities have caused the changes to occur more rapidly and become more readily identifiable in special education. Analyses of the daily activities carried out by special education teachers finds that a major portion of their time is spent on program management and supervisory tasks. As part of their program management duties they:

- coordinate and manage the information provided by the interdisciplinary teams responsible for developing the IEP;
- assess the developmental and performance level of individual students;
- design and implement the programs to fulfill the IEP;

- develop behavior management and maintenance strategies;

- assess the impact of the teaching; and

- revise the programs based on student progress (Heller and Pickett, 1981).

In addition to these programmatic duties, teachers are increasingly becoming frontline managers. They:

- plan and schedule the activities of paraprofessionals and other ancillary staff;

- they direct the work of paraprofessionals, peer tutors and other volunteers;

- assess the performance and productivity of paraprofessionals; and

- develop and implement on-the-job coaching procedures to improve the skills of paraprofessionals as well as volunteer staff (Pickett, 1986).

The Changing Roles of Paraprofessionals

Like those of their professional colleagues, the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals are in transition and are becoming more intricate and demanding. While they run audio-visual equipment, assist teachers with routine recordkeeping, monitor playgrounds and lunchrooms, and assist on school buses, their roles are no longer viewed as being primarily clerical. Instead they now participate in all phases of the instructional process. They extend and support the programmatic and classroom management functions of teachers or other education professionals by:

- tutoring individual and small groups of students;

- task analyzing instructional objectives established by the teacher;

- administering and scoring informal assessment instruments;

- observing, recording and charting student behaviors;

- implementing behavior management programs developed by the eacher, and more (Vasa and Steckleberg, 1988; Pickett, 1988; Heller and Pickett, 1981; White et al, 1980; Semrau et al, 1980).

Beyond the work paraprofessionals perform in the classroom, policy makers are also beginning to employ them to serve on crisis intervention teams for students with behaviorial disorders and to work alongside physical, occupational and speech therapists. Increasingly districts are utilizing them as job

coaches in secondary vocational and supported work programs where they monitor students working off campus and prepare them to live and work independently. They serve as a link between special and regular education for students with special needs who are ready to move to less restrictive environments. And as local districts have begun to develop and implement intervention services for infants and toddlers and early childhood programs, they are almost automatically including paraprofessionals as members of the service delivery team.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES AND PERSONNEL PRACTICES

Although paraprofessionals are recognized as key members of the instructional team, little attention has been paid to the employment practices, regulatory procedures or classroom management issues that influence the quality and productivity of their on-the-job performance.

Procedures for successful recruitment, utilization, training and supervision need to be "institutionalized" and systematically administered. The information, guidelines and techniques presented in this section are designed to assist policy makers and program administrators in their efforts to strengthen the contributions paraprofessionals make to improving and increasing services for students with special needs. The first unit stresses the need to establish structured procedures for the management and supervision of paraprofessionals. It is followed by a series of units with suggestions for: 1) establishing functional job descriptions and criteria for mobility through positions specified on a career ladder for paraprofessionals; 2) designing and implementing comprehensive training models that combine on-the-job coaching, formal pre and inservice sessions, and opportunities for post-secondary education; and 3) designing procedures to certify the mastery of skills and knowledge tied to performance standards and opportunities for upward mobility.

Management and Supervision of Paraprofessionals

Policy makers, upper-level managers, and frontline supervisors have individual and joint responsibilities for developing and implementing procedures that will enhance the recruitment, training, utilization and retention of skilled paraprofessionals. For example: Policy makers in state administrative agencies are responsible for establishing regulations or guidelines that will incorporate these procedures into the statewide system of educational practices. Administrators in local districts are responsible for developing job descriptions and providing opportunities for career development and mobility for paraprofessionals. Principals are responsible for creating flexible schedules that allow teachers and paraprofessionals to meet regularly for planning and coaching sessions. And teachers are responsible for supervising the day-to-day performance of paraprofessionals. Institutions of higher education and staff developers may assist in the process by developing training programs for paraprofessionals in collaboration with state and local education agencies and preparing teachers to supervise and work more effectively with paraprofessionals.

In the previous section, we described the classroom management and supervisory duties that are being added to the more traditionally recognized responsibilities of teachers. While these changes are taking place in the classroom they are not always recognized in the administrative practices in effect in the district. For example, organizational structures frequently designate the principal or other supervisory/resource personnel from the district office as the supervisors and evaluators of instructional paraprofessionals. Thus, eliminating the teacher from formal participation in this critical component of classroom management and blurring the lines of authority between the teacher and the paraprofessional. To facilitate the integration of paraprofessionals into the classroom or a related services program, policy makers need to (re)think this system and involve teachers more directly in selecting, supervising, evaluating and coaching paraprofessionals.

In addition, principals and staff developers need to develop strategies that will nuture, support and prepare teachers to take on these new supervisory tasks. (See Appendix A for a description of specific roles and responsibilities of policy makers, administrators and teachers in the management and supervision of paraprofessionals; and a list of management and supervisory skills required by teachers.)

The Need for Differentiated Staffing

Paraprofessionals are not "mini-teachers". Although teachers and paraprofessionals perform some tasks that overlap, particularly in technical skill areas, e.g. observing, recording and charting data, providing direct instruction, implementing behavior management programs, it is the professional staff member who is responsible for assessing the functioning levels of students and prescribing the programs that will meet these needs. The role of the paraprofessional is to work alongside the teacher and to implement the programs and carry out other tasks that are planned and assigned by the teacher.

While paraprofessionals support and extend the programmatic and administrative functions of teachers in myriad ways, placing them in the classroom is not necessarily a panacea. In fact, additional problems can be created if their duties are not clearly defined, if lines of authority in the classroom are not delineated, if they are not closely monitored and supervised, and if their performance is not systematically evaluated. It is, therefore, critical for local school districts to establish differentiated staffing arrangements that delineate the roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraprofessionals based on Task (job) Analysis. There are a number of techniques for analyzing tasks in order to develop differentiated staffing arrangements, functional job descriptions, structured training programs and career advancement options. Appendix B briefly outlines the methodology used to develop the guidelines and procedures presented in this manual. Appendix C contains a format for developing job descriptions for different levels of paraprofessional positions. And Appendix D provides sample job descriptions for different steps on a model career ladder for paraprofessionals.

Job Descriptions

The value and importance of functional job descriptions cannot be overstated. Effective well constructed job descriptions serve as the foundation for the development of cohesive plans and procedures for hiring, deploying, managing, training and maintaining skilled paraprofessionals.

The key to the development of job descriptions and differentiated staffing arrangements must begin with an in-depth analysis of the functions that take place in classrooms and related services programs. In general the activities/tasks fall into two operational categories: The first is program planning and implementation (assessment, diagnosis, prescription and direct intervention). The second is classroom management (organization, supervision and evaluation of support personnel, material development and maintenance, record keeping).

Using the results of a task analysis or a similar procedure, personnel at the district and building level will be able to develop job descriptions that define the relationship between teachers and paraprofessionals including the distinctions in their roles and responsibilities and areas where they may perform the same or similar tasks.

Specific information that will be available to administrators, teachers and paraprofessionals through the various elements contained in a functional job description are:

- duties the paraprofessional will be responsible for;
- skills and knowledge paraprofessionals require to perform their assigned duties;
- experiential and educational requirements for a specific paraprofessional position;
- criteria for advancement to another position (step) on a career ladder for paraprofessionals;
- a statement of who supervises the day to day work of the paraprofessional; and
- standards for evaluating the on-the-job performance.

Career Ladders

In most school districts across the country, developing structured procedures for career mobility for paraprofessionals is not always a high priority item on the list of personnel practices that need to be addressed. And yet, the work of the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals over the last decade, reveals that the primary reason skilled paraprofessionals choose to leave the field is to seek employment in other job markets that offer higher salaries and/or opportunities for career advancement.

A career ladder approach to staff mobility has recognizable advantages for both the employee and employer:

- Career ladders with multiple points of entry and standards for upward mobility through separate and discreet levels enable personnel to: a) enter the system in positions for which they have the appropriate skills and knowledge base; b) end their career advancement based on personal goals and job preference; and c) know where they can realistically expect to go in the organizational framework of the district.
- Career ladders enable the district to provide a higher quality of services by providing a mechanism to facilitate the retention of a cadre of skilled support staff and to reduce costs associated with recruiting and training new staff. Further, they offer the district an opportunity to identify and encourage

talented paraprofessionals to enter teacher education programs as one way to alleviate chronic shortfalls in the various categories of certified staff.

Development of viable career ladders for paraprofessional personnel can be achieved by reviewing the results of the Task (Job) Analysis and:

- dividing operational functions into multiple independently definable activities; and then

- assigning the activities to either professional or paraprofessional positions depending on the complexity of the task and the level of skills and knowledge required to perform the task (See Appendix D for a model career ladder for paraprofessionals.)

Training

In order to improve all facets of the educational process, all members of the instructional team must be prepared to assume the duties they are expected to perform - including paraprofessionals. Over the last decade, private and public agencies have focused considerable attention on the need to increase the competency and productivity of teachers. However, little has been done to develop systems and techniques that will improve the skills of the paraprofessional workforce. The overwhelming majority of paraprofessionals providing direct services to students with special needs receive limited, if any, training.

The major tasks that must be addressed by administrators in order to develop a comprehensive plan of career development for paraprofessionals include a) developing a process and content that are relevant to the identified training needs of paraprofessionals; b) insuring that training activities and strategies are selected that recognize the unique characteristics of adult learners; and c) developing permanent mechanisms for delivering the different components of a district wide training program.

There are various strategies staff developers may utilize to provide paraprofessionals with the knowledge and skills they require. To be effective, all of the elements should be inter-related and combine structured on-the-job coaching with formal inservice training sessions:

- On-the-job coaching is a staff development tool that is often overlooked by trainers and supervisory personnel. This training technique employs the expertise of teachers and other professional personnel to provide individual paraprofessionals with the basic skills required to perform their current job. The purpose of this phase of the training is to provide paraprofessionals a chance to practice the skills and to receive constructive feedback during regularly scheduled conferences with the teacher or another designated supervisor.

- Structured in-service training sessions should supplement the training paraprofessionals receive on-the-job. This phase of

the training should offer paraprofessionals an opportunity to gain information about the rights of students with disabilities, to develop legal, ethical, communication and problem solving skills that will improve their performance as members of the team, and to become familiar with the safety and emergency procedures established by the district. Further this training should enable paraprofessionals to learn and master more complex skills required to advance to another position on a career ladder.

The Roles of Institutions of Higher Education

Among the most under-appreciated support systems available to local districts for developing training programs and incentives for advancement for paraprofessionals, are the resources available through two and four year institutions of higher education. Developing, implementing and maintaining comprehensive systems of career development is not an easy task for any school system. By developing collaborative efforts among state and local school districts, community colleges and teacher education programs and using the expertise and resources available through the different jurisdictions, several benefits can be gained:

- School districts will have access to assistance in designing and conducting pre and inservice training programs for paraprofessionals.

- There will be greater availability of paraprofessional personnel with the skills required to work in positions that are continuing to evolve and to become more complex and demanding; e.g. job coaches, assistant teachers in preschool programs, speech therapy and physical therapy assistants, and other instructional paraprofessionals.

- Paraprofessionals will have access to post secondary education programs designed to meet their individual needs and to more readily achieve professional status if that is their personal goal.

- Curriculum designers in two and four year colleges will have greater access to information that will enable them to revise their curricula to prepare their graduates (whether professional or paraprofessional) to assume their assigned tasks. (See Appendix E for description of suggested competencies for instructional paraprofessionals, model training programs, and strategies for strengthening linkages with institutions of higher education.

Certification Credentialing Procedures for Paraprofessionals

There is a growing recognition among policy makers in state education agencies, program administrators in local school systems, employee organizations and organizations representing professional educators of the need to

develop: standards for employment of paraprofessionals, criteria for evaluating their on-the-job performance, guidelines for career advancement, and plans for career development. One of the more controversial issues related to that process, centers on whether or not state departments of education should develop credentialing procedures for paraprofessionals.

Credentialing procedures designed to provide a mechanism for certifying that a paraprofessional has mastered the skills required to enter a position or to advance to the next level on a career ladder is not a new idea. Indeed 13 states have criteria for hiring and promotion that they regard as credentialing systems. Most of these systems were developed during the late 1960s and early 70s, and they have not been revised since they were promulgated.

That is where the similarity ends. No two states use the same standards for determining appropriate roles and responsibilities for paraprofessionals - in fact neighboring localities in the same state may use different criteria. Some of the credentials are permanent, others require renewal. Some apply to all paraprofessionals, still other systems were designed to cover only special education paraprofessionals. Some have prescribed educational and experiental requirements for employment and advancement, others do not.

Advocates for developing new or strengthening current statewide credentialing systems for paraprofessionals have identified four major benefits that will accure:

- By setting standards and mandating specified levels of training and performance, certification would guarantee that paraprofessionals have the skills and knowledge required to perform their assigned duties.

- Effective certification procedures would be based on realistic viable opportunities for upward mobility on various levels of a paraprofessional career ladder, and therefore, would serve as an incentive for retaining skilled paraprofessionals.

- Certification would establish clear distinctions in the complexity of the tasks associated with different certificate/permit levels, matching responsibilities with training/education and competency.

- Certification would serve as a method for providing formal recognition to the contributions paraprofessionals make to the delivery of instructional services (Pickett, 1986).

(See Appendix F for sample evaluation instruments and Appendix G for a description of the Kansas and Georgia credentialing models.)

APPENDIX A

INTEGRATING PARAPROFESSIONALS INTO CLASSROOMS AND OTHER SETTINGS

1. The Responsibilities of District Level Administrators
2. The Responsibilities of Principals
3. The Responsibilities of Teachers
4. The Responsibilities of Policy Makers in State Education Agencies
5. Supervisory and Management Skills Required by Teachers

INTERGRATING PARAPROFESSIONALS INTO CLASSROOMS AND OTHER SETTINGS

The following overview briefly outlines some of the specific duties of program administrators at the district, building and state level with respect to developing and implementing policies and procedures that apply to the deployment, training, career mobility and supervision of paraprofessionals (Pickett, 1986 and 1988).

District level personnel are responsible for:

- structuring differentiated staffing arrangements;
- revising or developing job descriptions and other personnel practices for teachers and paraprofessionals that acknowledge their changing and expanding roles;
- developing and delivering systematic inservice training for paraprofessionals that combines formal classroom sessions and supervised on-the-job coaching;
- developing opportunities for career advancement with multiple points of entry for both paraprofessionals and their professional colleagues including standards for upward and lateral mobility for paraprofessionals;
- restructuring district policies and procedures to enable teachers to participate in the selection, placement, supervision and evaluation of paraprofessionals;
- developing and implementing inservice training programs to improve the supervisory and management skills of teachers;
- providing principals and other local supervisors with information that will expand their capacity to assist teachers and paraprofessionals to assume their evolving duties.

The responsibilities of principals and other supervisory/resource staff assigned to work with the instructional team include:

- being aware of the impact of additional duties in the areas of program and classroom management on the overall performance of teachers;
- recognizing paraprofessionals as members of the instructional team and creating an environment in the school that accepts them in this role;
- involving teachers directly in the selection, placement and management of paraprofessionals;
- being aware of the goals and objectives of training programs for paraprofessionals and providing constructive feedback to encourage them to use and maintain the skills they learn during the training;

- developing criteria and instruments for assessing the on-the-job performance of paraprofessionals and involving teachers in the evaluation process;

- participating in annual performance reviews;

- scheduling opportunities for teachers and paraprofessionals to meet regularly for planning and coaching sessions;

- being available to assist the members of the instructional team to assist them in solving interpersonal and other problems that may occur in the classroom; and

- providing teachers and paraprofessionals with the assistance they need to cope effectively with the sometimes conflicting concerns of policy makers and members of the instructional team.

The responsibilities of teachers include:

- setting goals, planning and scheduling the activities of the paraprofessional;

- directing and supervising the day to day work of the paraprofessional;

- determining and delegating appropriate tasks to the paraprofessional;

- assessing the performance of the paraprofessional; and

- meeting regularly to provide on-the-job coaching based on the results of performance evaluations.

The responsibilities of policy makers in state education agencies include:

- developing administrative guidelines and regulations to assist local districts to design and implement comprehensive programs for career development for paraprofessionals;

- convening representatives from local school districts, two and four year institutions of higher education, professional and employee organizations representing teachers and paraprofessionals to assist in: a) analyzing the changing roles of paraprofessionals, b) evaluating the need to develop or revise employment and credentialing procedures to reflect these changes, c) developing and testing policies and procedures for credentialing, d) developing and disseminating standardized instructional materials, e) developing strategies to encourage qualified paraprofessionals to apply for admission to teacher education programs; and f) revising curricula to prepare teachers to supervise paraprofessionals;

- developing and administering regulations and guidelines with regard to a broad range of personnel practices that affect the employment and training of paraprofessionals;

- reassessing state policies on staffing patterns and reimbursement based on analysis of data from districts and other resources.

SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR TEACHERS

The personnel management skills required by teachers to integrate, supervise and assess the work of paraprofessionals include:

- a knowledge of district policies with regard to the employment, roles and duties, placement and evaluation of paraprofessionals;
- an ability to plan, assign and schedule specific duties for paraprofessionals based on a knowledge of their previous experience, level of training and demonstrated competency to perform a task;
- an ability to direct and monitor the day to day work of the paraprofessionals;
- an ability to delegate appropriate tasks to paraprofessionals;
- an ability to use effective communication and problem solving techniques to reduce interpersonal or other problems that may occur in the classroom;
- an ability to objectively and systematically assess the on-the-job performance to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the paraprofessional assigned to the classroom; and
- an ability to plan and provide structured on-the-job coaching sessions based on the identified needs of the paraprofessionals.

APPENDIX B

TASK (JOB) ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

TASK ANALYSIS - A PROCESS

The methodology used to develop the guidelines, procedures and strategies, for improving the performance and status of paraprofessional staff, presented in this manual is a modified form of a system of Task Analysis developed by the New Careers Training Laboratory (NCTL) located at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. The NCTL system is one of several that exist for Task Analyzing the job functions of different categories and levels of agency personnel in education and other human services delivery systems.

This approach provides a framework for collecting, processing and interpreting data about various tasks and functions that occur in classrooms and other educational settings where paraprofessionals are members of the service delivery teams. A completed Task Analysis will provide administrators with information required to:

- determine the essential tasks that must be performed to assure the delivery of individualized services for students with different functioning levels and learning styles;
- determine where and how these tasks should be performed;
- determine what level of skills and knowledge are required to carry out the tasks;
- determine how the work (tasks) being performed can be evaluated objectively;
- determine who should be responsible for the direct supervision and evaluation of various categories and levels of personnel;
- determine educational requirements, entry level skills, and other selection criteria for employees;
- determine standards for both pre and inservice training;
- design and implement systematic training programs; and
- set standards for career mobility either vertically or laterally across programmatic lines.

An effective Task Analyis must be based on the over all philosophy of service delivery in effect in the local school district and goals established by the district for achieving its mission. The Task Analyst(s) begins by identifying the functions that take place in the classroom and then isolates and analyzes each task to determine the following information.

Activities: The specific work individual team members must perform to achieve identified goals.

Conditions: The circumstances under which the task will be performed - specifically where and how the activities should take place and who should perform them.

Criteria: The standards by which the quality of work will be evaluated.

Primary Skills: The essential skills and knowledge required to perform the activity.

Secondary Skills: Additional skills that will enhance and improve the employee's primary skills.

Desirable Skills: More complex skills which cannot always be acquired through on-the-job training - but are reflected in the workers performance (e.g. good judgement, patience, dependability, creativity, a recognition of the rights of students and other ethical behavior).

A review of the information gathered through the Task Analysis process enables the analyst to determine that level of skill and knowledge required to perform a specific task and to assign the activity to either the teacher or the paraprofessional or both. For example: The teacher is responsible for determining the instructional objectives and developing a lesson plan to achieve the objectives. Both the teacher and paraprofessional provide direct intervention based on the lesson plans. The paraprofessional is responsible for maintaining materials and equipment in good condition and ordering supplies.

A completed Task Analysis Worksheet for one activity follows on the next page.

APPENDIX C

1. Format for Developing Job Descriptions

2. Interviewing and Hiring Procedures

DEVELOPING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

After the Task Analysis has been completed, each job can be described in detail in a form which paraprofessionals and their supervisors can understand and follow. The job description serves the following functions:

- it provides supervisory staff with a description of duties assigned to each position;
- it tells each employee what specific tasks s/he is responsible for, who will supervise him/her and how s/he will be evaluted;
- it states criteria for selection into an entry level position on a career ladder; and standards for advancements to another position.

This sample form for designing job descriptions includes directions for completing each component.

NCTL JOB DESCRIPTION FORM

Job Title:_____

I. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Summarize the main activities from the Task Analysis for this position on the career ladder.

II. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

List all the activities and their conditions from the Task Analysis assigned to this position. Give as detailed a picture as possible. If assigned tasks seem to overlap for people in different levels/positions state what the person in each position is responsible for.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE JOB

A. Entry Requirements

For the first position on the career ladder, the entry requirements are the same as the criteria for employment.

For all other positions on the career ladder, the entry requirements are the skills, experience, training and/or academic credentials needed for advancement from the previous job. The skills required to conduct each activity on the Task Analysis for this position can also be stated here.

B. Advancement Requirements

List the on-the-job coaching and formal inservice training, post secondary education and work experience which are needed for promotion.

IV. SUPERVISION

State who supervises the paraprofessional. If someone other than the immediate supervisor (the teacher or another professional educator) gives technical help, on-the-job training and resource information, state who this person is. The chain of command and formal communication channels for complaints, can also be stated here.

V. EVALUATION

A. Who Evaluates

State who evaluates the day to day performance and who conducts the annual performance reviews of the paraprofessional.

B. How Often

State how often the paraprofessional will be evaluated and whether there is a probationary period. Describe briefly what the paraprofessional's role is in the evaluation and what general agency procedures for evaluation of all personnel apply.

C. Criteria

State the standards by which the quality of the work will be assessed.

INTERVIEWING AND HIRING PROCEDURES

There are two primary reasons for conducting interviews. The first is to refine selection and placement procedures by gathering specific information about an applicant's prior work experience, skills, special talents and hobbies, educational background and reasons/attitudes about wanting to work with children. The second is to provide the applicant with information about the program, the job requirements, the duties of paraprofessionals and how they differ from those of the teacher, training and career advancement opportunities, salary and benefit packages, and other personnel policies, e.g. probationary periods, sick leave and evaluation criteria.

Because of the unique nature of the teacher/paraprofessional partnership, the teacher who will be responsible for supervising the paraprofessional should be included in the selection process.

When interviewing applicants for paraprofessional positions it is important to learn about previous work or volunteer experience or special interests applicants may bring to the job that may enhance the program. For example:

- Has the applicant ever worked as a volunteer? Where? What duties/roles did the applicant perform?
- Has the applicant worked with children or adolescents before? In what capacity?
- Does the applicant have special knowledge about community resources or service organizations?
- What special talents/skills does the applicant have that might enhance the classroom activities, e.g. can the applicant use a computer, play an instrument, sew, do woodworking or another craft, type, know how to perform CPR or emergency first aid procedures?

Questions should relate directly to the applicant's ability to do the job. Questions concerning age, citizenship, family situations (the number and ages of children, child care provisions, marital status) and political or religious affiliation are generally inappropriate since they may trigger biases on the part of the interviewer(s).

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS BASED ON A MODEL CAREER LADDER

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS BASED ON A MODEL CAREER LADDER

The sample job descriptions contained in this appendix begin with an entry level position and move through three more advanced steps on a career ladder established for instructional paraprofessionals. They were designed based on the results of site visits conducted in school districts nationwide and an analysis of job descriptions currently in use in several systems. They demonstrate the broad range of tasks and responsibilities paraprofessionals are currently performing. Because every district uses different titles, we have chosen titles that are generic and also reflect the change in the status of paraprofessionals in the delivery of educational services.

In all of these job descriptions, the teacher is designated as the supervisor. Since similar tasks are also performed by paraprofessionals assigned to other educational and related service programs, other professional staff may serve as supervising personnel including physical, occupational and speech therapists, rehabilitation specialists, vocational trainers and others.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Instructional Associate (Entry Level)

DEFINITION: In this entry level position, paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a teacher or other certified personnel. They do not act independently nor do they have responsibility for making decisions about any aspect of a student's educational program. Typical duties assigned to entry level paraprofessionals fall into the following categories: monitoring and escorting students, record keeping, material preparation, re-enforcing lessons for individual students.

FUNCTIONAL DUTIES: Instructional Associates are responsible for supporting and assisting the teacher(s) by:

- facilitating the (re)integration of students with special needs into general education by accompanying them (when appropriate) to and from classrooms or related services programs;
- assisting students to use libraries and other resource facilities;
- monitoring student play and other activities on the playground and in the lunchroom;
- overseeing students on buses;
- assisting students with maintaining personnel hygiene;
- lifting, transferring and positioning students with physical disabilities;
- maintaining a safe, clean and orderly classroom;

- re-enforcing lessons developed and introduced by the teacher;

- consistently using the same behavior management and disciplinary procedures as the teacher;

- preparing instructional materials;

- assisting students to develop self-help skills including toileting, dressing and eating independently; and

- recording grades, keeping daily attendance, and ordering materials selected by the teacher.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL DUTIES: Instructional Associates are responsible for:

- maintaining confidentiality about all aspects of student performance and written and oral records;

- demonstrating a respect for the legal and human rights of students;

- following health and safety procedures established by the district;

- arriving and departing punctually and notifying appropriate personnel when they must be absent;

- demonstrating loyalty, dependability, integrity, and other ethical standards;

- following the chain of command for various administrative procedures including grievances.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The on-the-job performance of personnel in this position will be evaluated twice during each school year. The quality of the work performed will be assessed using criteria developed by the district for demonstrating mastery of the skills required to perform the assigned tasks. The principal (program director) and the teacher (supervisor) will have joint responsibility for assessing and sharing the results of the formal evaluation with the paraprofessional.

SUPERVISION: Because of the nature of the duties paraprofessionals perform in these entry level positions, they are frequently assigned to work with more than one teacher. While individual teachers are responsible for directing and assigning tasks to the paraprofessional when they are working in their classroom, the scheduling and evaluation of the paraprofessional will be coordinated by a lead teacher, the principal or other supervisory personnel.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Applicants for these entry level positions must 1) have a high school diploma or a GED equivalent or have had at least one year of prior experience in a program for children or adults with special needs; 2) be able to lift and transfer physically dependent students, 3) complete a pre-service (agency) training program consisting of an orientation to district safety and emergency procedures, the human and legal rights of students with disabilities, and the roles of entry level personnel including legal and ethical responsibilities.

ADVANCEMENT CRITERIA: In order to move up the ladder to the position of Instructional Paraprofessional an applicant must 1) complete a standardized inservice training program for Instructional Paraprofessionals (approximately 60 hours) provided by the district combined with two years of experience and structured on the on-the-job coaching, or earn 12 hours of appropriate academic credit (as approved by the district) combined with one year of experience and structured on-the-job coaching; 2) demonstrate empathy and expertise in working with students with special needs; and 3) demonstrate an ability to work as an effective member of the instructional team.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Instructional Paraprofessional or Communication /PT or OT Assistant

DEFINITION: The Instructional Paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a certified teacher or another professional staff member and participates in all phases of the instructional process. (Depending on state laws or regulatory procedures set by a state board of education, a paraprofessional in this position may have limited decision making authority with regard to non-instructional activities.)

FUNCTIONAL DUTIES: Instructional Paraprofessionals are responsible for supporting and assisting the teacher by:

- carrying out direct instructional activities planned by the teacher; or
- carrying out therapeutic programs developed by occupational, physical or speech therapists;
- tutoring individual and small groups of students using appropriate modeling, prompting and other cues;
- implementing behavioral interventions including age appropriate re-enforcement strategies developed by the teacher;
- observing, recording and charting data about student performance and progress;
- scoring tests and papers;
- task analyzing instructional objectives established by the teacher;
- preparing individualized instructional materials, bulletin boards, learning centers;
- meeting/conferring regularly with the teacher to plan classroom activities and participate in on-the-job coaching sessions;
- transferring and positioning students with physical disabilities;

- monitoring the arrival and departure of students;

- recording attendance; and

- collecting and filing student data.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL DUTIES: Instructional Paraprofessionals are responsible for:

- maintaining confidentiality about all aspects of student performance and written and oral records;

- demonstrating a respect for the legal and human rights of students;

- following health and safety procedures established by the district;

- arriving and departing punctually and notifying appropriate personnel when they must be absent;

- demonstrating loyalty, dependability, integrity and other ethical standards;

- following the chain of command for various administrative procedures including grievances.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The overall performance of personnel in this position will be reviewed and evaluated twice during each school year. The quality of the work performed will be assessed using criteria developed by the district for demonstrating mastery of the skills required to perform the assigned instructional tasks and following legal and ethical standards. The principal (program director) and the teacher (supervisor) will have joint responsibility for assessing and sharing the results of these formal performance reviews with the paraprofessional.

SUPERVISION: The Instructional Paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of the teacher or another professional staff member who is responsible for assigning, directing and delegating tasks to the paraprofessional, assessing the day to day performance of the paraprofessional and providing structured on-the-job coaching for the paraprofessional.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Applicants for this position must: 1) have at least two years of supervised experience with systematic on-the-job coaching and have completed a formal inservice training program developed and provided by the district; or 2) earn 12 academic credits in courses approved by the district and have one year of supervised work experience in the district as an Instructional Associate; or 3) have a high school diploma, three years work experience in another community based agency serving children and adults with disabilities, and either be enrolled in an AA degree program or demonstrate mastery of required skills during a one month probationary period.

ADVANCEMENT CRITERIA: Candidates for advancement to the position of either of the two positions described below -Job Coach and Early Childhood Assistant Teacher - must have the following credentials or work experience. The applicant must 1) have an AA degree in one of the following program areas: early childhood education,

special education or a human services programs to prepare personnel to work with children or adults with developmental disabilities; or 2) be certified as a Child Development Associate (CDA) and have two years prior experience as a paraprofessional in a pre-school or early intervention program for infants and young children; or 3) have three years prior experience as an Instructional Paraprofessional employed by the district and have completed a pre or inservice program developed by the district for Job Coaches.

POSITION DESCRIPTION - A

JOB TITLE: Assistant Teacher (Early Childhood)

DESCRIPTION: The Assistant Teacher works in either a center based (classroom) or home based program serving children with special needs (ages 3-5). The program may be administered by the local school district or operated by another community based service delivery system. Personnel in this position may be responsible for supervising Instructional Associates (entry level paraprofessionals); and depending on state or local regulations for early childhood programs they may assist in the design and implementation of programs for young children with special needs and carry out other instructional tasks specifically delegated by the certified teacher.

FUNCTIONAL DUTIES: Assistant Teachers in Early Childhood Program for young children with special needs are responsible for:

- consulting with the certified teacher and planning programs geared for young children or toddlers with special needs;
- collecting and charting data and assisting the teacher in other assessment activities to determine a child's development level;
- selecting instructional objectives and re-enforcement strategies under the direction of the teacher to meet the individual needs of each child in the group; tutoring individual or small groups of students;
- selecting and using appropriate prompting, modeling and other cueing techniques;
- participating in IEP meetings;
- conferring with parents under the direction of the teacher about their child's program and progress;
- organzing and scheduling classroom activities and maintaining a safe pleasant physical environment;
- monitoring the day to day work of Instructional Assistants; and
- carrying out other tasks delegated by the teacher.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL DUTIES: Assistant Teachers in Early Childhood programs are responsible for:

- maintaining confidentiality about all aspects of student performance and written and oral records;
- demonstrating a respect for the legal and human rights of students;
- following health and safety procedures established by the district;
- arriving and departing punctually and notifying appropriate personnel when they must be absent;
- demonstrating loyalty, dependability, integrity, and other ethical standards;
- following the chain of command for various administrative procedures including grievances.

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The overall performance of personnel in this position will be reviewed and evaluated twice during each school year. The quality of the work performed will be assessed using criteria developed by the district for demonstrating mastery of the skills required to perform the assigned instructional tasks and following legal and ethical standards. The principal (program director) and the teacher (supervisor) wil have joint responsibility for assessing and sharing the results of these formal performance reviews with the paraprofessional.

SUPERVISION: The Assistant Teacher works under the direct supervision of a certified teacher or depending on the structure of the program the center director. In addition, personnel in this position oversee the work of Instructional Assistants, student (peer tutors) and volunteers.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: Applicants for the position of Assistant Teacher must have an AA degree in child development or special education or be certified as a Child Development Assosicate (CDA) with three years experience in an early childhood and early intervention program.

ADVANCEMENT CRITERIA: In order to advance to the position of teacher or other professional staff position the candidate must have a minimum of a BA degree in education or hold a provisional license meeting the criteria established for early childhood educators by state certifying agencies.

POSITION DESCRIPTION - B

JOB TITLE: Job Coach/Trainer

DESCRIPTION: The Job Coach/Trainer works in a secondary transitional program for students with disabilities that is administered by the local school district, or a vocatioal training program operated by community based service provider agencies serving adults with special needs. They have limited decision making authority and carry out activities specifically delegated by the teacher when they are working off campus.

FUNCTIONAL DUTIES: Job Coaches are responsible for:

- consulting with teachers or vocational/rehabilitation specialists to design programs to meet the goals of individualized transition programs for students with special needs;

- supervising students in off campus supported/vocational training work program;

- developing instructional strategies under the direction of the teacher designed to prepare the student to perform all aspects of the job as specified by the employer;

- assisting students to develop good work habits including reliability and punctuality, following directions, communicating with co-workers, following safety procedures or other work rules set by the employer;

- familiarizing the employer with the special needs of the student;

- recording information about student performance and progress and sharing the information with other members of the instructional team;

- maintaining records about student attendance and information required by the school district or employer;

- preparing students to live and work independently in the community by preparing them to use public transportation, shop for food and clothes, participate in various recreational activities;

- providing the students and their families with information about how to gain access to and participate in entitlement programs;

- performing other tasks assigned by the teacher or vocational trainer/specialists; and

- serving as a liaison between the school and other community based resource agencies.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES: Job Coach/Trainer are responsible for:

- maintaining confidentiality about all aspects of student performance and written and oral records;

- demonstrating a respect for the legal and human rights of students;

- following health and safety procedures established by the district;

- arriving and departing punctually and notifying appropriate personnel when they must be absent;

- demonstrating loyalty, dependability, integrity, and other ethical standards;

- following the chain of command for various administrative procedures including grievances;

- serving as a role model for the student(s).

EVALUATION CRITERIA: The overall performance of personnel in this position will be reviwed and evaluated twice during each school year. The quality of the work performed will be assessed using criteria developed by the district for demonstrating mastery of the skills required to perform the assigned tasks and following legal and ethical standards set by the districts. The principal (program director) and the teacher (supervisor) will have joint responsibility for assessing and sharing the results of the formal evaluation with the paraprofessional.

SUPERVISION: The Job Coach works under the direct supervision of the teacher or another credentialed professional assigned to this role by the district. The supervisor is responsible for directing the day to day activities of the job coach, delegating appropriate duties, assessing performance and productivity of the job coach, and providing structured on-the-job training to the job coach.

ADVANCEMENT CRITERIA: In order to advance to the position of teacher, rehabilitation specialists, social worker or other professional positions the job coach must earn an advanced academic degree and/or have a provisional license meeting criteria set by state certifying agencies.

APPENDIX E

TRAINING GUIDELINES AND MODELS

1. Suggested Competencies for Instructional Paraprofessionals
2. A Model Core Curriculum for Instructional Paraprofessionals
3. Model Training Programs for Paraprofessionals
4. Suggestions for Improving Linkages Among Service Providers and Institutions of Higher Education

SUGGESTED COMPETENCIES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONALS*

I. Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals
The paraprofessional will demonstrate a knowledge of:

- the changing and expanding roles of paraprofessionals in special education and related human services;
- the roles and responsibilities of teachers as program managers and supervisors of paraprofessionals and other support staff;
- the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of teachers and paraprofessionals in the instructional process;
- the legal, ethical and professional standards of conduct for personnel established by the local school district;
- the roles of other professional staff and administrative staff in the service delivery system;
- effective communication skills; and
- problem solving skills that will strengthen the performance of the instructional team.

II. Understanding Students with Special Needs
The paraprofessional will demonstrate a knowledge of:

- basic terms and principles used to describe normal human growth and development;
- major developmental stages of physical, cognitive, language and social/emotional development;
- the characteristics and unique needs of the students served in the program(s) where the paraprofessional works including: individualized instructional strategies, adaptive equipment and basic signing;
- other community based services available for students with special needs and their parents;
- the causes and the impact of several disabilities on the performance of the student in the classroom.

III. Understanding the Rights of Students with Special Needs
The paraprofessional will demonstrate a knowledge of:

- the history of services to persons with developmental disabilities; and

- the rights and entitlements of students and adults with special needs.

IV. Understanding the Instructional Process
The paraprofessional will demonstrate:

- a knowledge of the various components of the instructional process including: the IEP, collecting and recording data, formal and informal assessment methods, behavior management and maintenance techniques, setting behavioral objectives and teaching strategies;

- a knowledge of the meaning of observable and measurable behavior;

- an ability to observe and record data objectively;

- an ability to follow behavior intervention programs and use behavior management techniques developed by the teacher;

- an ability to task analyze a behavior (skill) and prepare a step by step lesson based on the results of the analysis;

- an ability to conduct individualized lessons under the direction of the teacher including: preparing material in advance, establishing and maintaining attending behaviors, teaching one concept at a time, and providing appropriate reinforcers

V. Understanding Emergency, Health and Safety Procedures
The paraprofessional will demonstrate:

- a knowledge of emergency procedures developed by the district;

- a knowledge and ability to use first aid procedures;

- an ability to perform CPR;

- an ability to assist a person who has a seizure;

- a knowledge of good body mechanics

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*These competencies were developed through the work of this project and serve as the framework for the instructional material contained in A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PARA-PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES. The National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education, The Graduate School City University of New York, 1988.

A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONALS

This series of modules, developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Human Services, comprise a suggested core curriculum for paraprofessionals. They are competency based and were piloted tested by local school districts in various demographic and geographic areas nationwide. Each module follows the same format and includes: 1) background/instructional materials for trainers, 2) handouts for trainees, 3) suggested activities, exercises and training procedures, and 4) information about supplemental resources.

As paraprofessionals complete this training and move through various positions on a career ladder, more advanced training with customized options for different programmatic areas will be required. The NRC modules are:

I. Understanding the Roles and Responsibilities of Paraprofessionals

This module is divided into two parts. Part one provides paraprofessionals with an understanding of the changes in the duties of teachers and paraprofessionals that have occurred over the last decade; the important distinctions between these duties; and the legal, ethical and professional standards of conduct paraprofessionals must practice. The activities in part two are designed to provide trainees with increased self-awareness about their strengths and weaknesses as members of the instructional team and prepare them to use problem solving and communication techniques to reduce frictions that may develop among teachers, paraprofessionals and other co-workers.

II. Understanding Students With Special Needs

This module is divided into three parts. Unit one provides a brief overview of the basic principles of human development. Part two familiarizes trainees with major areas of disabilities that may affect the developmental and functioning level of students. It closes with a review of other related education programs and community based services required by students with special needs.

III. Understanding the Rights of Students With Disabilities

This unit is designed to provide paraprofessionals with an understanding of why community based service delivery systems for people with disabilities were developed, the philosophy that underlies these services, and the rights and entitlements of students in special education and its related services.

IV. Understanding the Role of the Paraprofessional in the Instructional Process

The purpose of this module is to provide the paraprofessional with knowledge and skills needed to assist teachers and other professional personnel in the delivery of instructional and other direct services. The activities in this module will introduce the paraprofessional to the components of the instructional process. The individual sections are: The Individualized Education Plan, Formal and Informal Assessment, Observing Objectively, Collecting and Recording Data, Behavioral Interactions and Interventions, and Teaching Strategies.

V. Understanding Emergency, Health and Safety Procedures

This module provides paraprofessionals with skills they need to: carry out the emergency procedures established by their local school districts in the event of fire, natural disasters, accidents; to assist a person who has been injured, is ill, or is experiencing a seizure; and the proper procedures to use when transferring and positioning students with disabilities.

TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

In most states, the responsibility for training paraprofessionals is left up to local school districts with little technical or fiscal assistance from the state. There are signs, however, of increased awareness among policy makers in state education agencies of the need to develop systematic procedures for training paraprofessionals. In Louisiana, Colorado and Illinois, the Divisions of Special Education have developed instructional materials for local districts to use as a resource. In Missouri, the State Department offers a variety of technical assistance services through the Resource Center located at the University of Missouri in Columbia. And because of the problems associated with providing formal inservice training to paraprofessionals in a largely rural state, the Montana University Affiliated Program Satellite has developed a manual for independent study that requires regularly scheduled consultation with supervising teachers; it joins a similar strategy for self instruction and consultation available in Indiana. The Oklahoma Department of Education created training guidelines for paraprofessionals working in programs for students with severe and profound disabilities. They also provide direct training for these paraprofessionals. In Maine they are using multiple strategies for creating systematic training programs including the appointment of a Task Force representing community colleges and local school districts for the purpose of designing and implementing a statewide plan.

A Statewide Model

The Facilitator model developed by the Kansas State Division of Special Education is an example of a model that supports and enhances the work of local school districts. The system is based on a trainer of trainers model and includes the following components: The state agency trains Facilitators/Trainers designated by local districts or service providers serving students with special needs. They prepare the trainers to use instructional materials developed by the agency, and provide them with information about supplemental resources that are available from other sources. After the training is completed the Facilitators are responsible for designing and delivering a minimum of twenty-clock hours of inservice training a year and certifying to the state that the special education paraprofessionals in their district have participated in the training. The training relates directly to criteria for advancement through a three level Permit System administered by the state. (See Appendix G for a description of the Permit System.)

A District Level Model

The following example of an inservice model was developed by the Wyandotte Special Education Cooperative located in Kansas City. It extends and builds on the regulations and assistance provided by the state. The Coop has designed and implemented a 74 hour Core Competency Program. The goals of the training are to provide paraprofessionals with: 1) a knowledge and skill base applicable to all areas of special education, 2) the opportunity to gain additional expertise in programmatic areas serving students with different needs, and 3) to reward paraprofessionals and encourage them to remain in the district. The strategies used to implement the program include:

- Training is done primarily during the paraprofessional's work day, usually at times when students are not attending classes (i.e., district inservice days and parent conference days, reporting periods, etc.) Occasionally it is necessary for a paraprofessional

to leave the classroom to attend training for one to two hours in the afternoon. This is necessary in order to keep the number of participants in each training session at 25 or less.

- A competency based course is considered successfully completed when the paraprofessional passes a test over the course content. In addition, paraprofessionals who choose to do so may schedule a time outside of working hours to take tests over any of the core competencies. If they "test out" by achieving the criteria established for successful completion of the course(s), they are not required to enroll in the formal coursework. A policy initiated in 1986 links advancement on the salary schedule to completion of individual courses, therefore, two options for movement up the salary scale are available to paraprofessionals.

A Collaborative Model

Few state and local education agencies have developed joint efforts with institutions of higher education to improve the availability and quality for inservice training.

One approach to developing an inservice model is being spearheaded and tested by the Special Education Division of the Department of Education and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. A Task Force comprised of representatives from the state education agency and administrators and teachers from local education agencies has developed priorities calling for restructuring policies and procedures at the state level that will improve training and other employment practices that influence the performance and productivity of paraprofessionals.

Various activities are being carried out at the University to achieve the goals established by the Task Force, including material development and direct technical assistance to local school districts. Among the more innovative aspects of this project are the efforts underway to develop mechanisms and curricula to prepare teachers at both the Baccalaureate and Graduate degree levels to supervise, evaluate and provide structured on-the-job coaching for paraprofessionals.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING LINKAGES AMONG SERVICE PROVIDERS AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

In order to develop cooperative efforts between service delivery systems and institutions of higher education ranging from community colleges to post graduate degree programs, administrators and staff developers concerned with improving training and career advancement programs for paraprofessionals should:

- seek out and make common cause with other human service delivery systems that employ paraprofessional personnel who require the similar skills to those employed by the district. (By presenting data supporting the expanding job opportunities for paraprofessionals in a wide range of agencies, there will be greater receptivity among college administrators in community colleges to develop or revise programs and curricula);

- reach out to administrators in various post secondary institutions to: 1) determine what programs exist that mesh with the district's career development plan; 2) assess how an existing program(s) could be changed to accommodate educational and scheduling needs of the paraprofessionals in the district; and 3) explore the feasibility of a) developing an inservice model with mutually agreed upon standards for completion, and b) utilizing community college faculty to offer the courses at conveniently located worksites as a method for offering academic or continuing education credit for successful completion of training program.

- review state matriculation requirements and examine how a local two or four year college could change admission requirements within the established regulations that would recognize work and educational experience of current employees and, thereby, encourage them to enroll in a post secondary program;

- encourage teacher education programs to schedule Baccalaureate Degree level courses late in the afternoon or early evening to enable paraprofessionals interested in becoming teachers to enter the program; and

- encourage teacher education programs preparing students to work in special education to revise their curricula to include courses designed to prepare teachers to supervise and work more effectively with paraprofessionals and other support staff.

*Adapated from: CAREER LADDERS AND A TRAINING MODEL FOR THE (RE)TRAINING OF DIRECT SERVICE WORKERS IN COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York.

APPENDIX F

STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATING PARAPROFESSIONAL AND SAMPLE EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

1. The Process of Evaluation
2. Observation Checklist
3. Annual Performance Review Form
4. Performance/Skills Inventory for Paraprofessionals

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION

Components of Evaluation

Some school districts have procedures and criteria for conducting formal performance reviews. Most do not. The components of a system for assessing the performance and productivity of paraprofessionals should include:

- PRE-OBSERVATION ACTIVITIES (defining skill/competency areas to be evaluated, establishing criteria for assessing the performance, constructing observation checklists and determining who will conduct the evaluation);

- STRUCTURED SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION (scheduling, observing and recording the results on a performance checklist);

- ANALYSIS (reviewing and analyzing the results of the evaluation and determining what skills need to be strengthened);

- COACHING (It is hard to know where evaluation ends and on-the-job training begins. Providing positive feedback is an invaluable tool that enables teachers and other supervisory staff to direct the work of the paraprofessional, correct problems and recognize the contributions the paraprofessional makes to the various activities that take place in the classroom. The primary steps that comprise this stage of the process are: describing what tasks and skills will be evaluated and when and how they will be assessed, giving feedback about the results of the evaluation, determining strategies for conducting the coaching, and providing the coaching.)

This material was adapted from: Pickett, Anna L., A TRAINING PROGRAM TO PREPARE TEACHERS TO SUPERVISE AND WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL; National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services, Center for Advanced Study in Education, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York, 1986.

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST*

Paraprofessional _____ Date: __/__/__

Activity _____ Time _____

Observer: _____

Instructions: Observe and rate the paraprofessional on each of the following items by circling: (1) excellent; (2) very good; (3) average; (4) below average; (5) poor; and (6) no opportunity to observe.

Did the Paraprofessional	Ratings
1. Follow lesson plans developed by teacher	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. State expectations to student	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. Tutor sequentially	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Provide opportunities for response	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Use prompts and stimulate responses effectively	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. Present the activity in reasonable time frame	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. Measure performance against objectives	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Provide planned reinforcement in a timely and consistent manner	1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Prepare instructional materials prior to the lesson	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Maintain control of the instructional situation	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Adjust to environmental/student change	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. Use materials effectively	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Stay on task	1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Maintain accurate records	1 2 3 4 5 6

Comments:

From Vasa, S.F., Steckelberg, A.L., & Ronning, L. (1983). Guide for effective utilization of paraprofessionals in special education. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PARAPROFESSIONALS*

EMPLOYEE_____ SCHOOL YEAR_____

Rate performance items according to the following scale: 1=Excellent, 2=Above Average, 3=Average, 4=Needs Improvement, and 5=Unsatisfactory.

A. Professional and Ethical Responsibilities and Team Participation

1. Arrives and departs on time	1	2	3	4	5
2. Adheres to agency/school policy with regard to late arrival and absences					
3. Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the policies, practices and chain of command in the agency/school					
4. Demonstrates ethical conduct (honesty, loyalty, objectivity, dependability)					
5. Demonstrates respect for students' individual needs and rights to privacy, due process, and dignity					
6. Maintains confidentiality of all written records and verbal information regarding students, their parents and families					
7. Demonstrates respect for colleagues					
8. Demonstrates the ability to initiate appropriate independent action consistent with agency policy to protect the safety and well-being of students					
9. Demonstrates the ability to be flexible and cooperative					
10. Demonstrates the ability to accept constructive feedback about on-the-job performance.					

B. Participation in the Instructional Process

1. Demonstrates an ability to follow instructions and lesson plans using strategies/methods established by the teacher	1	2	3	4	5
2. Assists the teacher in objectively observing, recording, and charting behavior					
3. Assists the teacher in administering, monitoring, and scoring objective tests and papers					
4. Teaches lessons sequentially					
5. Provides clear instructions to students and uses appropriate modeling, prompts and cueing techniques					

(continued)

6. Implements behavior management strategies using the same emphasis, reinforcers and techniques as the teacher	1	2	3	4	5
7. Contributes appropriate feedback to the teacher about student performance					
8. Assists in the preparation of materials for use in specific instructional programs					
9. Carries out other tasks assigned by teacher and/or administrators (e.g. records attendance, escorts students to other classrooms, monitors playgrounds, assists students with personal hygiene, operates audio visual equipment.)					

Comments:

Yearly Goals and Methods for Improving Skills and Performance:

Supervisor/Teacher_____ Date_____

Paraprofessional_____ Date_____

Principal_____ Date_____

*Developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services

A PERFORMANCE/SKILLS INVENTORY FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS*

(This inventory can be adapted and used for several purposes: Program administrators and task analysts can use it as the basis for brainstorming items to include in a formal Task (job) Analysis. Staff developers can use it to identify topics to be addressed during inservice training sessions. And teachers and paraprofessionals can use it as a guide for planning appropriate work assignments. The directions provided below describe a process that will enable paraprofessionals to assess their on training needs.)

Directions:
This is NOT a test! There are no right or wrong answers. This Inventory is a tool you can use to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses as a member of the instructional team. It is designed to assist you in determining the areas where training is needed to help you improve your on-the-job performance. Many of the skills in this inventory are used by all paraprofessionals no matter what program or setting they are assigned to e.g., physical, occupational, speech therapy, pre-school programs or vocational training programs. So while some of the items refer to "the teacher" you may want to think in terms of "my supervisor".

-Circle the number to the right of each item which best describes the way you work as a paraprofessional. Remember, the duties assigned to you or the way you carry them out may be affected by several factors including your own attitudes, job descriptions, rules and regulations of your school district, the needs of the students, and the attitudes and expectations of the teacher about appropriate roles and duties for paraprofessionals. THEREFORE, keep the requirements of your job in mind as you complete the inventory.

-The first section of the Inventory will help you assess your skills in the various components of the instructional process. Part two will allow you to evaluate your communication and problem solving skills, and part three will enable you to assess your ability to follow the professional, legal and ethical standards of conduct established by the district for all employees.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROCESS

A. Observing and Recording Data

As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

	never	sometimes			regularly
1. Observe what a student is doing without guessing at the reasons for the action?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Observe what a student is doing without judging whether the action is good or bad?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Describe a student's behavior in observable terms?	1	2	3	4	5
4. State a student's strengths and weaknesses in behavioral terms?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Use behavior checklists or other instruments for recording student behavior?	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

B. Instructional Objectives
As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

	never		sometimes		regularly
1. Distinguish between "long-range" goals and a "short-term" objectives?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Implement instructional objectives developed by the teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Write instructional objectives including the following components: the behavior, the condition, and the criteria?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Select, with the assistance of the teacher, appropriate objectives based on functional assessment of a student's performance?	1	2	3	4	5

C. Task Analysis
As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

1. Task analyze an objective and break it into its most important sub-steps?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Arrange the sub-steps into a logical teaching sequence?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Observe a student's response and modify the teaching steps (omitting or adding sub-steps as appropriate)?	1	2	3	4	5

D. Instructional Strategies
As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

1. Follow the lesson plans developed by the teacher for the entire class or individual students?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Prepare materials prior to the lesson?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Isolate and teach one concept at a time?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Give clear concise directions to the class or student?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Provide prompts/cues when necessary or model the expected behavior?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Use age appropriate reinforcement strategies?	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

	never	sometimes			regularly
7. Follow consistently the behavior management and disciplinary strategies developed by the teacher?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Encourage and allow adequate time for the student(s) to respond?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Report the results of the lesson to the teacher in objective/behavioral terms?	1	2	3	4	5

II. PROFESSIONAL, LEGAL AND ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

1. Arrive on time or alert appropriate personnel in timely fashion if you will be absent?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Observe work rules and procedures established for all district personnel?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Demonstrate a willingness to learn new skills?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Maintain confidentiality of student records and other personal information both written and oral?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Promote and protect the rights of students to due process, privacy and dignity?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Promote the safety and well being of students e.g. reporting cases of suspected abuse to the teacher or other designated personnel?	1	2	3	4	5

III. COMMUNICATION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION

As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

1. Learn and use the teaching strategies, disciplinary and behavior management techniques, the rules and structure the teacher uses in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Follow instructions and directions from your supervisor and ask for assistance if you do not understand the directions?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Follow the chain of command established by the district?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Let the teacher know about special interests, experiences, and talents you may have that will contribute to implementing instructional programs?	1	2	3	4	5

(continued)

As a paraprofessional, to what extent do you:

	never	sometimes			regularly
5. Make a point or share an idea clearly and concisely by using positive methods of communication?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Identify your verbal and non-verbal reactions that may have an impact on your ability to communicate effectively with other people?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Meet regularly with the teacher for the purpose of planning lessons and discussing problems in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Determine the cause of job related problems and identify "real" problems?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Consider alternative solutions to the problems?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Test solutions to determine if they work?	1	2	3	4	5

*From: A Training Program for Paraprofessionals Working in Special Education and Related Services, National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Special Education and Related Services, 1988.

APPENDIX G

STATE-WIDE CREDENTIALING MODELS

1. The Kansas System
2. The Georgia System

THE KANSAS MODEL

Analyses of the various credentialing procedures for paraprofessionals currently in effect nationwide reveals that only under the Kansas Permit System are local school systems required to provide training for paraprofessionals working in different paraprofessional positions.

Advancement in this three-tiered system is based on a combination of inservice training, experience, and college courses approved by the local district. To reach level III, the paraprofessional must complete either an AA Degree at a community college or earn 60 hours of academic credit. The system applies only to special education paraprofessionals. The state department has: a) developed an extensive array of instructional materials; b) provides technical assistance to local school districts to help plan and conduct the training; c) conducts regional training conferences to supplement the efforts of the districts; and d) reimburses districts for a percentage of the costs of paraprofessional salaries. The districts retain responsibility for determining: e) where, what, and how the training will be provided, f) assigning paraprofessionals, g) setting salary scales, and h) certifying that a paraprofessional is ready to move to the next level.

THE GEORGIA MODEL

The Georgia Department of Education has recently revised a credentialing process that had been in effect for several years. The new licensing procedures recognize two levels of auxiliary support personnel - Paraprofessional and Aide. A Paraprofessional is defined as: "A person in a support position working under the supervision of the classroom teacher(s). The Paraprofessional has some decision-making authority limited and regulated by the professional". The position of Aide is defined as: "An employee who takes no independent action and has no decision-making authority but performs routine tasks assigned by professionally certified personnel."

The State Department has established: qualifications for employment for both levels, standards for licensure and renewal, evaluation criteria and procedures for verifying that eligibility requirements have been met. Local districts are responsible for: designing and providing training using guidelines developed by the state, maintaining individual records for the employees with regard to completion of staff development hours, and verifying of eligibility for licensure or renewal.

APPENDIX H

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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